

the dreadful attacks of September 11, we have been honored by the support and compassion of our friends around the world. While it is necessary and just to condemn countries for the threat they pose, I believe it is equally vital to honor countries for the support they provide. Liechtenstein is one of these countries whose contribution should be recognized. For these reasons, I encourage my colleagues to take a closer look at the unique nation of Liechtenstein and join me in honoring their great accomplishments.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. STEARNS from Florida for offering the resolution before us. I hope our colleagues support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 233, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

SBA ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ACT OF 2007

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2359) to reauthorize programs to assist small business concerns, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2359

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act of 2007”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—REVISIONS TO SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Sec. 101. Small Business Development Centers operational changes.

TITLE II—GRANT INITIATIVES

Sec. 201. Capital Access Initiative.

Sec. 202. Disaster Recovery Program.

Sec. 203. Innovation and Competitiveness Services to Manufacturers Initiative.

Sec. 204. Mature Entrepreneurs Assistance Program.

Sec. 205. Small Business Sustainability Initiative.

Sec. 206. Grants to small business development centers to provide assistance in securing affordable health insurance.

Sec. 207. National regulatory assistance.

Sec. 208. Report.

TITLE III—SCORE

Sec. 301. Repeal of Active Corporation of Executives.

Sec. 302. Increasing the proportion of SCORE volunteers from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Sec. 303. Benchmark reporting.

TITLE I—REVISIONS TO SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

SEC. 101. SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS OPERATIONAL CHANGES.

(a) ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENT.—Section 21(a)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) in the proviso, by inserting before “institution” the following: “accredited”;

(2) in the sentence beginning “The Administration shall”, by inserting before “institutions” the following: “accredited”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new sentence: “As used in this paragraph, the term ‘accredited institution of higher education’ means an institution that is accredited as described in section 101(a)(5) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)(5)).”

(b) PROGRAM NEGOTIATIONS.—Section 21(a)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)(3)) is amended, in the matter before subparagraph (A), by inserting before “agreed” the following: “mutually”.

(c) CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS.—Section 21(a)(3)(A) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)(3)(A)) is amended by inserting after “uniform negotiated” the following: “mutually agreed to”.

(d) NO SBA INTERFERENCE IN SBDC HIRING.—Section 21(c)(2)(A) of that Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)(2)(A)) is amended by inserting after “full-time staff” the following: “, the hiring of which is carried out by the center without interference from, and without influence by, any officer or employee of the Administration.”

(e) CONTENT OF CONSULTATIONS COVERED BY PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS.—Section 21(a)(7)(A) of that Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)(7)(A)) is amended by inserting after “under this section” the following: “, or the content of any consultation with such an individual or small business concern.”

(f) REPEAL OF AUTHORITY TO USE AUTHORIZED AMOUNTS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Section 21(a)(4)(C)(v) of that Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)(4)(C)(v)) is amended by amending subclause (I) to read as follows:

“(I) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts made available in any fiscal year to carry out this section, not more than \$500,000 may be used by the Administration to pay expenses enumerated in subparagraphs (B) through (D) of section 20(a)(1).”

(g) NO CAP ON NON-MATCHING PORTABILITY GRANTS IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER.—Section 21(a)(4)(C)(viii) of that Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)(4)(C)(viii)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “However, in the event of a disaster, the dollar limitation in the preceding sentence does not apply.”

(h) DEFINITION OF SBDC.—Section 21(a) of that Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(8) DEFINITION.—For the purposes of this section, a Small Business Development Center is—

“(A) the entity selected by the Administrator to receive funds pursuant to the funding formula set forth in paragraph (4); or

“(B) the site at which the services specified by this section are delivered.”

(i) LIMITATION ON DISTRIBUTION TO SBDCs.—Section 21(b) of that Act (15 U.S.C. 648(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) LIMITATION ON DISTRIBUTION TO SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in this paragraph, the Administrator shall not distribute funds to a Small Business Development Center if the State in which the Small Business Development Center is located is served by more than one Small Business Development Center. For purposes of this limitation, the term Small Business Development Center shall have the meaning set forth in subsection (a)(8).

“(B) UNAVAILABILITY EXCEPTION.—The Administrator may distribute funds to two Small Business Development Centers, as that term is defined in subsection (a)(8)(A), if no applicant has applied to serve the entire State. Except as provided in subparagraph (C), the Administrator is prohibited from distributing funds to more than two Small Business Development Centers.

“(C) GRANDFATHER CLAUSE.—The limitations in this paragraph shall not apply for any State in which more than one Small Business Development Center received funding prior to January 1, 2007.”

(j) REPORTING OF BROADBAND SERVICE PURCHASES.—Section 21(c) of that Act (15 U.S.C. 648(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(9) REPORTING OF BROADBAND SERVICE PURCHASES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to policies adopted by the Administrator, Small Business Development Centers shall report information to the Administrator by nine-digit zip code—

“(i) whether the individual seeking counseling purchases broadband service at the address reported to the Small Business Development Center;

“(ii) if the reported address is different than the business address, whether broadband service is purchased at the business address; and

“(iii) if broadband service is not purchased at the addresses set forth in clauses (i) and (ii).

“(B) REPORTING.—The Administrator shall aggregate data by nine-digit zip code reporting such information to the Federal Communications Commission and the National Telecommunication and Information Administration.”

TITLE II—GRANT INITIATIVES

SEC. 201. CAPITAL ACCESS INITIATIVE.

Section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(n) CAPITAL ACCESS INITIATIVE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A lead Small Business Development Center may apply for an additional grant to carry out a capital access initiative program.

“(2) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—Under a program under paragraph (1), the Center shall—

“(A) provide capital education by creating a model template to assist individuals in preparing for a broad range of capital offerings;

“(B) assess company potential by conducting company assessments, which shall include, at a minimum, risk analysis and mapping of best capital opportunities;

“(C) prepare individuals to request capital by advising on the various aspects of such a request, including the business plan, the financials, the projections, the presentation, and the approach;

“(D) provide education on the rules of access engagement, organizations involved and available, and approaches that maximize successful requests; and

“(E) deliver ongoing assistance once capital is secured.

“(3) SUPPORT.—In carrying out this subsection, the Administrator shall obtain support from national associations and from organizations such as regional development groups and ‘angel’ groups founded by Small Business Development Centers.

“(4) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—Each grant under this subsection shall be for at least \$100,000.

“(5) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—No applicant may receive more than \$300,000 in grants under this subsection in a fiscal year.

“(6) FUNDING.—Subject to amounts approved in advance in appropriations Acts and separate from amounts approved to carry out section 21(a)(1), the Administrator may make grants or enter into cooperative agreements to carry out this subsection.”.

SEC. 202. DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAM.

Section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648), as amended by this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(o) DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A lead Small Business Development Center may apply for an additional grant to carry out a disaster recovery program.

“(2) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—Under a program under paragraph (1), the Center shall—

“(A) serve, in partnership with the Administration's disaster center response teams, as a locally based resource for first responders by—

“(i) rotating personnel into a disaster area for immediate response on the ground, processing applications, developing an evaluating recovery business models, and distributing accurate information; and

“(ii) providing continued interaction, over time, with businesses that are recovering from a disaster;

“(B) participate in ongoing national disaster training;

“(C) develop specific State-level disaster response plans; and

“(D) form a network with other Centers to serve as a platform for sharing disaster expertise, training, and human resources.

“(3) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—Each grant under this subsection shall be for at least \$50,000.

“(4) FUNDING.—Subject to amounts approved in advance in appropriations Acts and separate from amounts approved to carry out section 21(a)(1), the Administrator may make grants or enter into cooperative agreements to carry out this subsection.”.

SEC. 203. INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS SERVICES TO MANUFACTURERS INITIATIVE.

Section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648), as amended by this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(p) INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS SERVICES TO MANUFACTURERS INITIATIVE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A lead Small Business Development Center may apply for an additional grant to carry out an innovation and competitiveness services to manufacturers initiative program.

“(2) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—Under a program under paragraph (1), the Center shall—

“(A) participate in national training institutes to provide training to all programs of the Center to assist those programs to qualify for technology accreditation designation;

“(B) develop, disseminate, and regularly update best practices ‘toolkits’ that include best practices for resources, training programs, consultative approaches, and support services;

“(C) recruit and engage significant local assets and resources (such as colleges, universities, economic development organizations, and trade associations) in each State;

“(D) launch nationally a locally based but common themed marketing program, targeted at small manufacturers;

“(E) undertake aggressive outreach to increase the levels of innovation and competitiveness, focusing on business advisement and training for manufacturers;

“(F) provide ongoing professional development to personnel of the Center and of other resource partners; and

“(G) develop and report performance, using common evaluation metrics and outcome measurements.

“(3) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—Each grant under this subsection shall be for at least \$150,000.

“(4) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—A grant under this subsection may not exceed \$500,000.

“(5) FUNDING.—Subject to amounts approved in advance in appropriations Acts and separate from amounts approved to carry out section 21(a)(1), the Administrator may make grants or enter into cooperative agreements to carry out this subsection.”.

SEC. 204. MATURE ENTREPRENEURS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648), as amended by this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(q) MATURE ENTREPRENEURS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A lead Small Business Development Center may apply for an additional grant to carry out a mature entrepreneurs assistance program.

“(2) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—Under a program under paragraph (1), the Center shall—

“(A) provide advisors and training resources to assist business owners in recognizing and developing transition plans, including by—

“(i) providing training and educational screening processes on the potential benefits and hazards of self-employment; and

“(ii) developing courses, consulting processes, and highly targeted resource materials, and deploying them throughout the Small Business Development Center network;

“(B) link business owners with additional resource service providers to prepare businesses for transition, including by increasing partnership opportunities, particularly with the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE);

“(C) identify business opportunities for those interested in acquiring businesses;

“(D) help individuals identify and acquire financing for acquisition; and

“(E) provide continuing support once transition has occurred.

“(3) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—Each grant under this subsection shall be for at least \$175,000.

“(4) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—A grant under this subsection may not exceed \$350,000.

“(5) FUNDING.—Subject to amounts approved in advance in appropriations Acts and separate from amounts approved to carry out section 21(a)(1), the Administrator may make grants or enter into cooperative agreements to carry out this subsection.”.

SEC. 205. SMALL BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE.

Section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648), as amended by this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(r) SMALL BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A lead Small Business Development Center may apply for an additional grant to carry out a small business sustainability initiative program.

“(2) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—Under a program under paragraph (1), the Center shall—

“(A) provide necessary support to smaller and medium-sized businesses to—

“(i) evaluate energy efficiency and green building opportunities;

“(ii) understand the cost benefits of energy efficiency and green building opportunities;

“(iii) secure financing to achieve energy efficiency or to construct green buildings; and

“(iv) empower management to implement energy efficiency projects;

“(B) assist entrepreneurs with clean technology development and technology commercialization through—

“(i) technology assessment;

“(ii) intellectual property;

“(iii) Small Business Innovation Research submissions;

“(iv) strategic alliances;

“(v) business model development; and

“(vi) preparation for investors; and

“(C) help small business improve environmental performance by shifting to less hazardous materials and reducing waste and emissions at the source, including by providing assistance for businesses to adapt the materials they use, the processes they operate, and the products and services they produce.

“(3) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—Each grant under this subsection shall be for at least \$150,000.

“(4) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—A grant under this subsection may not exceed \$300,000.

“(5) FUNDING.—Subject to amounts approved in advance in appropriations Acts and separate from amounts approved to carry out section 21(a)(1), the Administrator may make grants or enter into cooperative agreements to carry out this subsection.”.

SEC. 206. GRANTS TO SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN SECURING AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE.

(a) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The Administrator of the Small Business Administration (hereafter in this section referred to as the Administrator) may award a grant under this section to a lead small business development center (as described under section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648)).

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant only for the purpose of providing to the owner of a small business concern assistance in identifying and securing affordable health insurance for their business and employees. A recipient of such a grant shall identify Federal, State, and local initiatives designed to assist small businesses and provide such education information to small business concerns seeking assistance on obtaining health insurance. A recipient of such a grant shall also work with health insurance providers in the area to identify premiums charged on health insurance for small business. A recipient of such a grant shall also attempt to negotiate lower health insurance premiums for small business concerns that seek the assistance of the recipient.

(c) MINIMUM GRANT AMOUNT.—A grant under this section may not be in an amount less than \$200,000.

(d) APPLICATION.—Each applicant for a grant under this section shall submit to the Administrator an application in such form as the Administrator may require. The application shall include information regarding the applicant's goals and objectives for helping address entrepreneur's concerns with health insurance costs.

(e) REPORT TO ADMINISTRATOR.—As a condition of receiving a grant under this section, the Administrator shall require the recipient of a grant to submit to the Administrator, not later than 18 months after the date on which the grant is received, a report describing how the grant funds were used.

(f) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS.—The Administrator may enter into a cooperative agreement or contract with the recipient of a grant under this section to provide additional assistance that furthers the purposes of this section.

(g) APPLICABILITY OF GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—An applicant for a grant under this section shall comply with all of the requirements applicable to a grantee under section 21 of the Small Business Act, except that the matching funds requirements of such section shall not apply.

(h) EVALUATION OF PROGRAM.—Not later than March 31, 2009, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report that contains an

evaluation of the grant program under this section.

(i) FUNDING.—Subject to amounts approved in advance in appropriations Acts and separate from amounts approved to carry out section 21(a)(1), the Administrator may make grants or enter into cooperative agreements to carry out this subsection.

SEC. 207. NATIONAL REGULATORY ASSISTANCE.

The Small Business Act is amended by inserting after section 21 (15 U.S.C. 648) the following:

“SEC. 21A. SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY ASSISTANCE.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

“(1) ASSOCIATION.—The term ‘Association’ means the association recognized by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration under section 21(a)(3)(A).

“(2) PARTICIPATING SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER.—The term ‘participating Small Business Development Center’ means a Small Business Development Center participating in the program.

“(3) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means the regulatory assistance program established under this section.

“(4) REGULATORY COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE.—The term ‘regulatory compliance assistance’ means assistance provided by a Small Business Development Center to a small business concern to enable the concern to comply with Federal regulatory requirements.

“(5) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER.—The term ‘Small Business Development Center’ means a lead Small Business Development Center described in section 21.

“(6) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa.

“(b) AUTHORITY.—In accordance with this section, the Administrator shall establish a program to provide regulatory compliance assistance to small business concerns through selected Small Business Development Centers, the Association of Small Business Development Centers, and Federal compliance partnership programs.

“(c) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program, the Administrator shall enter into arrangements with selected Small Business Development Centers under which such Centers shall provide—

“(A) access to information and resources, including current Federal and State non-punitive compliance and technical assistance programs similar to those established under section 507 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7661f);

“(B) training and educational activities;

“(C) confidential, free-of-charge, one-on-one, in-depth counseling to the owners and operators of small business concerns regarding compliance with Federal and State regulations, as long as such counseling is not considered to be the practice of law in a State in which a Small Business Development Center is located or in which such counseling is conducted;

“(D) technical assistance;

“(E) referrals to experts and other providers of compliance assistance who meet such standards for educational, technical, and professional competency as are established by the Administrator; and

“(F) access to the Internet and training on Internet use, including the use of the Internet website established by the Administrator under subsection (d)(1)(C).

“(2) REPORTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Each selected Small Business Development Center shall transmit

to the Administrator a quarterly report that includes—

“(i) a summary of the regulatory compliance assistance provided by the center under the program; and

“(ii) any data and information obtained by the center from a Federal agency regarding regulatory compliance that the agency intends to be disseminated to small business concerns.

“(B) ELECTRONIC FORM.—Each report required under subparagraph (A) shall be transmitted in electronic form.

“(C) INTERIM REPORTS.—A participating Small Business Development Center may transmit to the Administrator such interim reports as the Center considers appropriate.

“(D) LIMITATION ON DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS.—The Administrator shall not require a Small Business Development Center to disclose the name or address of any small business concern that received or is receiving assistance under the program, except that the Administrator shall require such a disclosure if ordered to do so by a court in any civil or criminal action.

“(d) DATA REPOSITORY AND CLEARINGHOUSE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program, the Administrator shall—

“(A) act as the repository of and clearinghouse for data and information submitted by Small Business Development Centers;

“(B) submit to the President, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives an annual report that includes—

“(i) a description of the types of assistance provided by participating Small Business Development Centers under the program;

“(ii) data regarding the number of small business concerns that contacted participating Small Business Development Centers regarding assistance under the program;

“(iii) data regarding the number of small business concerns assisted by participating Small Business Development Centers under the program;

“(iv) data and information regarding outreach activities conducted by participating Small Business Development Centers under the program, including any activities conducted in partnership with Federal agencies;

“(v) data and information regarding each case known to the Administrator in which one or more Small Business Development Centers offered conflicting advice or information regarding compliance with a Federal or State regulation to one or more small business concerns;

“(vi) any recommendations for improvements in the regulation of small business concerns; and

“(vii) a list of regulations identified by the Administrator, after consultation with the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Administration, who shall review such list, and the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman, as being most burdensome to small business concerns, and recommendations to reduce or eliminate the burdens of such regulations; and

“(C) establish an Internet website that—

“(i) provides access to Federal, State, academic, and industry association Internet websites containing industry-specific regulatory compliance information that the Administrator deems potentially useful to small businesses attempting to comply with Federal regulations; and

“(ii) arranges such Internet websites in industry-specific categories.

“(e) REVIEW OF BURDENSOME REGULATIONS AND PETITION FOR AGENCY REVIEW.—

“(1) TRANSMISSION OF LIST OF REGULATIONS TO CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY.—The Administrator shall transmit to the Chief

Counsel for Advocacy of the Administration a copy of the list of regulations submitted under subsection (d)(1)(B) as part of the annual report required by that subsection.

“(2) REVIEW OF LIST OF REGULATIONS.—The Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall review the list of regulations transmitted under paragraph (1) and identify any regulation that—

“(A) is eligible for review in accordance with section 610 of title 5, United States Code;

“(B) has a significant impact on a substantial number of small business concerns that is substantially different from the impact indicated in the final regulatory flexibility analysis for that regulation, as published with the final regulation in the Federal Register; or

“(C) has a significant impact on a substantial number of small business concerns and for which no final regulatory flexibility analysis was ever performed.

“(3) NOTIFICATION AND AGENCY REVIEW.—With respect to any regulation identified under paragraph (2) the Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall—

“(A) notify the appropriate Federal rule-making agency and the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management of the identification of such rule or regulation; and

“(B) request the review of such regulation—

“(i) in accordance with section 610 of title 5, United States Code; or

“(ii) for any impact it has on small business concerns.

“(4) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall publish an annual report containing a list of any regulation identified under paragraph (2) and the disposition by the appropriate agency.

“(f) ELIGIBILITY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A Small Business Development Center shall be eligible to receive assistance under the program only if the center is certified under section 21(k)(2).

“(2) WAIVER.—With respect to a Small Business Development Center seeking assistance under the program, the Administrator may waive the certification requirement set forth in paragraph (1) if the Administrator determines that the center is making a good faith effort to obtain such certification.

“(g) SELECTION OF PARTICIPATING STATE PROGRAMS.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—In consultation with the Association and giving substantial weight to the Association's recommendations, the Administrator shall select the Small Business Development Center programs of 2 States from each of the following groups of States to participate in the program:

“(A) Group 1: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont, and Rhode Island.

“(B) Group 2: New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

“(C) Group 3: Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Delaware.

“(D) Group 4: Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

“(E) Group 5: Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

“(F) Group 6: Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana.

“(G) Group 7: Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.

“(H) Group 8: Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Utah.

“(I) Group 9: California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, and Arizona.

“(J) Group 10: Washington, Alaska, Idaho, and Oregon.

“(2) DEADLINE FOR INITIAL SELECTIONS.—The Administrator shall make selections under paragraph (1) not later than 60 days after promulgation of regulations under subsection (k).

“(3) ADDITIONAL SELECTIONS.—Not earlier than the date 3 years after the date of the enactment of this paragraph, the Administrator may select Small Business Development Center programs of States in addition to those selected under paragraph (1). The Administrator shall consider the effect on the programs selected under paragraph (1) before selecting additional programs under this paragraph.

“(4) COORDINATION TO AVOID DUPLICATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—In selecting programs under this subsection, the Administrator shall give a preference to Small Business Development Center programs that have a plan for consulting with Federal and State agencies to ensure that any assistance provided under this section is not duplicated by an existing Federal or State program.

“(h) MATCHING NOT REQUIRED.—Subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 21(a)(4) shall not apply to assistance made available under the program.

“(i) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), each State program selected to receive a grant under subsection (g) in a fiscal year shall be eligible to receive a grant in an amount not to exceed the product obtained by multiplying—

“(A) the amount made available for grants under this section for the fiscal year; and

“(B) the ratio that the population of the State bears to the population of all the States with programs selected to receive grants under subsection (g) for the fiscal year.

“(2) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—The minimum amount that a State program selected to receive a grant under subsection (g) shall be eligible to receive under this section for any fiscal year shall be \$200,000. The Administrator shall reduce the amount described in paragraph (1) as appropriate to carry out the purposes of this paragraph and subsection (j)(2).

“(j) EVALUATION AND REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the establishment of the program, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an evaluation of the program and shall transmit to the Administrator, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report containing the results of the evaluation along with any recommendations as to whether the program, with or without modification, should be extended to include the participation of all Small Business Development Centers.

“(k) PROMULGATION OF REGULATIONS.—After providing notice and an opportunity for comment and after consulting with the Association (but not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section), the Administrator shall promulgate final regulations to carry out this section, including regulations that establish—

“(1) priorities for the types of assistance to be provided under the program;

“(2) standards relating to educational, technical, and support services to be provided by participating Small Business Development Centers;

“(3) standards relating to any national service delivery and support function to be provided by the Association under the program;

“(4) standards relating to any work plan that the Administrator may require a participating Small Business Development Center to develop; and

“(5) standards relating to the educational, technical, and professional competency of any expert or other assistance provider to whom a small business concern may be referred for compliance assistance under the program.

“(1) FUNDING.—Subject to amounts approved in advance in appropriations Acts and separate from amounts approved to carry out section 21(a)(1), the Administrator may make grants or enter into cooperative agreements to carry out this section.”.

SEC. 208. REPORT.

Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall submit to Congress a report evaluating the effectiveness of the new Small Business Development Center programs added by the amendments made by this title.

TITLE III—SCORE

SEC. 301. REPEAL OF ACTIVE CORPORATION OF EXECUTIVES.

Section 8(b)(1)(B) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(b)(1)(B)) is amended by striking “and an Active Corps of Executive (ACE)”.

SEC. 302. INCREASING THE PROPORTION OF SCORE VOLUNTEERS FROM SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS.

Section 8(b)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(b)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(H) The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) established under subparagraph (B) shall carry out a plan to increase the proportion of mentors who are from socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. SCORE shall, on an annual basis, report to the Administrator on the implementation of this subparagraph.”.

SEC. 303. BENCHMARK REPORTING.

Section 8(b)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(b)(1)), as amended by section 202, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(I) The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) established under subparagraph (B) shall, in consultation with the Administrator, establish benchmarks relating to the demographic characteristics and the geographic characteristics of persons assisted by SCORE, benchmarks relating to the hours spent mentoring by volunteers, and benchmarks relating to the performance of the persons assisted by SCORE. SCORE shall, on an annual basis, report to the Administrator on the extent to which the benchmarks established under this subparagraph are being attained.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses play a critical role in our economy. As the leading job creators and generators of nearly half of private sector gross domestic product, their impact is felt throughout the country.

Today, entrepreneurs are confronted with intense competition from foreign and corporate counterparts. They must continually update their products and processes, as well as adapt to change quickly.

Traditionally, the SBA's entrepreneurial development programs were created to provide direction and assistance to small business owners, helping them remain competitive and armed with the tools to maintain successful ventures. While providing critical assistance, these programs were created many years ago to address general business development issues faced by typical small businesses of the time.

There is no question the needs of entrepreneurs change as the environment does. The challenges facing entrepreneurs today are different from those even 5 years ago. SBA's entrepreneurial development programs must evolve to provide small businesses with the ability to deal with the economic conditions of today.

The Small Business Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act of 2007 introduced by Congressman SESTAK not only modernizes this program to adjust the current concerns of small businesses but also enhances them. Today, the leading issues for small firms are the rising health and energy costs and complying with regulations. This legislation will help small business owners identify and secure affordable health care. With less than half of small business owners providing health care, the need for legislation that helps alleviate this is clear.

Considering the current price of gasoline, there's no question why the number one concern for entrepreneurs is the cost of energy. Gasoline is more than \$3 a gallon. This price represents a 28 percent increase over a period of just 2 months ago and a 52 percent increase since the end of January. Due to small businesses' limited resources, as production costs are driven up, they become less competitive with their counterparts.

While the costs of energy and health care have risen, so has the regulatory burden for small businesses. In 2006, just seven major rules added over \$3.7 billion to the overall regulatory costs. That does not even account for the thousands of other regulations that were added last year. Small firms today require affordable access to information and counseling to address these new rules.

H.R. 2359, with its increased capacities, ensures that the SBDCs located in communities across the Nation have the ability to assist entrepreneurs in facing these challenges. For this reason, the SBA Entrepreneurial Development Act of 2007 has the support of the National Federation of Independent

Businesses. They are not only supporting but will key vote this legislation. By tailoring SBA's economic development programs to the economic demands and changing composition of small businesses, they will better promote business development this our communities.

H.R. 2359 will make sure small firms remain a driving force in our economy. I urge support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the request to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 2359, the SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act of 2007.

I would like to thank Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ for working in a cooperative and bipartisan manner to bring this bill to the floor. This bill makes modest yet necessary changes in the core entrepreneurial technical assistance programs of the SBA, the Small Business Development Center Program.

Small business development centers, on a relatively modest appropriation, provide free training sessions which last at least 1 hour and free individual one-on-one counseling. The centers met a total of 700,000 individual business owners and prospective owners in fiscal year 2007.

Changes are necessary to clarify the statutory mandate and ensure that small business development centers are appropriately responding to the new challenges facing America's entrepreneurs. These alterations are reflected in title I of the bill.

Even though the program is more than 25 years old, there is no definition of the term "small business development center," which substantially adds to the confusion interpreting the statutory language. I would like to thank the chairwoman for including the definition in the term.

Another key change demonstrates the need to update the mission of the small business development centers as technology and business practices change. Broadband access is no longer a luxury for many, if not most, small businesses; yet the only reliable data on broadband access in America comes from providers that make the reports to the Federal Communications Commission.

Congressman FORTENBERRY, the ranking member of the Committee's Subcommittee on Rural and Urban Entrepreneurship, had the idea that rather than relying on these providers, a more accurate picture might come from actually asking individuals whether they had access to broadband services. Mr. FORTENBERRY thought it would make sense to have the center survey their clients when they come in the door on the availability of broadband service. The survey might prove a valuable addition to supplement the existing data from broadband

providers. And without appropriate information on broadband access and penetration, it is impossible to develop policies that ensure small businesses will have affordable access to broadband.

Title II also includes a mechanism to increase the capacity of small business development centers to offer regulatory compliance assistance to small businesses disproportionately affected by erroneous regulatory burdens. It is an idea supported by the House in the previous four Congresses and by the National Federation of Independent Business. I would like to thank the chairwoman and Mr. SESTAK for including this critical assistance to small business owners.

Ultimately, H.R. 2359 is designed to help small businesses get the advice and assistance they need to continue their ever-increasing importance in maintaining America's prime place in the global economy.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I recognize Mr. SESTAK, the sponsor of the legislation, for as much time as he may consume.

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the distinguished chairwoman from New York for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support a piece of legislation to enhance two critical Small Business Administration entrepreneurial development programs, the Small Business Development Centers and the Service Corps for Retired Executives.

Serving as the Representative in a district that has been historically driven economically by vibrant local small businesses, I greatly appreciate and support the entrepreneurial development assistance that the SBA provides.

We know that entrepreneurial development programs work. Businesses who receive SBA entrepreneurial assistance are twice as likely to succeed. And for every Federal dollar spent on entrepreneurial development, \$7 are generated in increased tax revenue.

But in the past 3 years, due to changes in our ever-changing globalizing economy, my district has lost 607 small businesses and one out of five manufacturing establishments. This is a trend that I am committed to reversing through fostering entrepreneurial development and creating the right set of conditions to help businesses flourish, stay and be attracted to my district, and I believe that supporting effective small business entrepreneurial development programs is a key part of that strategy.

In 1980, Congress established the SBDC program to foster economic development by providing management, technical and research assistance to current and prospective small businesses. As you know, SBDCs provide services which include assisting small businesses with financial, marketing, production, organizational, engineering

and technical problems and feasibility studies.

SBDCs serve Americans with a desire to start their own venture but who lack the technical expertise associated with starting and running a successful business, and in the past decades, SBDCs have provided assistance to millions of entrepreneurs across America.

The SBDC program also represents the effective and efficient use of allocated Federal moneys through public/private collaboration. To that end, SBDCs are funded by matching moneys provided by State legislatures, foundations, State and local chambers of commerce, public and private universities, vocational and technical schools and community colleges. In fact, sponsors' contributions have been increasingly exceeding the minimum 50 percent matching share, signifying greater participation among such groups and institutions.

This is why I feel especially fortunate to have several Small Business Development Sub-Centers located at local universities, such as Widener University and the University of Pennsylvania, which provide critical business resources and technical assistance to small businesses in and around my district.

I would like to stress that the core SBDC program has been extremely effective, but there are certain operational improvements that can be implemented to increase the flexibility of SBDCs.

To that end, changes proposed in this legislation will ensure the quality of grant recipients to host SBDCs; help SBDCs maintain their autonomy from undue SBA interference; protect the confidentiality of SBDC clients; ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent as efficiently as possible by not using SBDC funds except for the sole purpose of business development; and allowing exemptions to the current cap on non-matching portability grants in the event of federally designated natural or human caused disasters.

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In addition to these operational changes, it is important to strengthen the SBDC core program, which successfully navigates entrepreneurs in managing their business, by establishing specific grant programs that will allow SBDCs to tailor their services.

For instance, the Capital Access Initiative would establish grants to assist entrepreneurs in processing loan applications and obtaining private equity. An Innovation and Competitiveness Initiative would establish grants to allow SBDCs to become technology centers, to help market technologies and advanced projects to manufacturers. A disaster recovery program would establish grants to allow SBDCs to assist and coordinate the Federal response for small business disaster victims.

The older entrepreneurial assistance program will target older Americans

interested in transitioning to become business owners, while the Small Business Sustainability Initiative will promote the development and implementation of energy-efficient and clean energy improvements and technology. And an Affordable Health Care Initiative will help small business owners provide affordable health care insurance options to their employees, as the chairwoman mentioned.

As I also spoke about, a second program which this legislation will address is SCORE, which provides entrepreneurs with free counseling assistance by former executives. SCORE provides a valuable service to small businesses, and I believe it will be even stronger with a provision to actively recruit volunteer mentors who will then provide a greater reflection of the social and economic diversity of those who will utilize SBA services, such as women and underrepresented minorities.

I urge all my colleagues to support this important bill, which will greatly enhance the business development resources available to America's small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to my good friend Mr. LATHAM.

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding me time, and I congratulate the committee and the chairman for bringing this piece of legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2359, the Small Business Administration Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act.

I am especially pleased that the Small Business Committee included legislation that I introduced earlier this Congress, H.R. 731, the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act, into this broad legislative package. This National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act utilizes one of SBA's most effective programs, the Small Business Development Center program. Generally the SBDCs support small businesses with financial, management, and marketing activities. My legislation, included in section 207 of H.R. 2359, creates a pilot program through the SBDCs that will provide free confidential counseling on regulatory compliance and help small businesses gain access to regulatory information and resources.

The research done by the Small Business Administration demonstrates that small businesses with less than 20 employees pay more than \$7,600 per employee to comply with Federal regulations each year, while large firms pay 45 percent less per employee. Adjusted for inflation, the annual cost of Federal regulations faced by America's small businesses in 2004 was over \$875 billion.

The fact of the matter is many small business owners have neither the time

nor the expertise to sort through hundreds of pages of regulations in the Federal Register. Small business owners often learn of their failure to comply with Federal regulations or even that new Federal regulations have been imposed only after a penalty has been assessed. The current system denies small businesses access to regulatory compliance assistance and further weakens the opportunity for America's small businesses to compete with larger firms both domestically and internationally.

The Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act represents a win-win for America's small businesses. Not only will the SBDCs help small business owners understand what they must do to comply with Federal regulations but also how they may do so in a most cost-effective manner.

Again, I would like to thank the committee for including this legislation in the bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the overall bill.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Today's entrepreneurs are facing countless challenges. SBA's entrepreneurial development programs must be modernized to provide small businesses with the ability to deal with the economic conditions of today.

Mr. SESTAK's legislation, the SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act of 2007, makes much-needed updates to the agency's programs so that they are better able to assist entrepreneurs and enable small firms to remain a driving force in our economy.

H.R. 2359 has the support of the NFIB, who, in addition to supporting it, has made it one of their key votes for the 110th Congress.

Again I want to thank Mr. SESTAK and also Mr. CHABOT, the ranking minority member, for working in a bipartisan manner to move this legislation and other bills that will be moved today. I want to thank the staff that worked on this bill. From the majority staff, Michael Day, Adam Minehardt, Nicole Witenstein; from Representative SESTAK's staff, Clarence Tong; and from the minority staff, Barry Pineles.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2359.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2359, the SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act of 2007. I commend our colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) for sponsoring this legislation. I also commend our colleague from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), Chairwoman of the Committee on Small Business, and the members of the Committee on Small Business for their initiatives to strengthen America's small businesses and for bringing to the House chamber today four important bills aimed at improving programs and services administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

H.R. 2359 would reauthorize certain entrepreneurial development programs and aid small businesses across our country in receiving enhanced assistance from Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). H.R. 2359 would also expand the services available

through SBDCs to include assistance aimed to help businesses prepare for and respond to economic disruptions caused by natural and manmade disasters, regulatory burdens, and increased costs. By ensuring that the SBDC core programs remain robust and authorizing new programs that are designed specifically to meet evolving needs of small business owners and operators, this bill will help SBDCs sustain a reputation as trusted and valued sources of technical assistance for our country's entrepreneurs.

This legislation would further make important changes to the Small Business Administration Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) Program. These changes will help ensure that SBA clients from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds can benefit from advice, counseling and mentoring from executives from similar, disadvantaged backgrounds. This bill would require the SBA to increase its efforts to recruit such executives to participate in the SCORE Program.

The SBDC and SCORE programs have been remarkably successful. This bill will help ensure that those excellent programs are as responsive as possible to the evolving needs of our country's small businesses. I urge my colleagues' support for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2359.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

SBA VETERANS' PROGRAMS ACT OF 2007

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2366) to reauthorize the veterans entrepreneurial development programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2366

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "SBA Veterans' Programs Act of 2007".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—OFFICE OF VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 101. Office of Veterans Business Development.